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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 195th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 23 January 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. TALLAWY

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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Second periodic report of China (CEDAW/C/13/Add.26)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Jin Yongjian (China) took a place at the Committee table.

2. Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) said that the second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention, submitted by China in 1989, had described the measures adopted to protect and enhance the status of women in China as well as the major problems faced by Chinese women. Since the submission of that report considerable changes had taken place in various areas concerning Chinese women. Under the eighth Five-Year Plan for National Economy and Social Development, launched in 1991, the Chinese Government was actively pursuing a peaceful foreign policy, accompanied by domestic reforms to open up the country to the outside world. As a result, favourable conditions were being created for the smooth implementation of the Convention and new endeavours were being made to promote the social development of women and to protect their legitimate rights and interests.

3. With regard to the improvement of laws and regulations concerning the protection of women's rights and interests, work was under way on a new law in that area, which would be submitted, later in 1992, to the seventh National People's Council at its fifth plenary session for its approval. The Ministry of Labour and Personnel had formulated a regulation, postponing the retirement age of senior qualified women to 60. Decisive legislative measures had been taken to combat such abuses as prostitution and traffic in women and children, and new provisions to protect women had been included in the legislation covering disabled persons and minors. New legal provisions had been adopted to protect the personal rights of women, as well as their rights in such areas as political participation, employment, education, marriage and the family.

4. Those initiatives had prompted similar measures at local levels. Thirty-one provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions around the country had formulated local regulations for the protection of women's rights and interests. Various associations and popular organizations had been called upon to publicize and explain laws, ensuring a better social environment for the protection of the rights and interests of women.

5. Turning to the question of women's participation in politics, he said that the relevant government departments, acting in concert with the All China Women's Federation (ACWF), had taken vigorous measures to promote the participation of women in politics, by improving their qualifications and by working to overcome prejudices against women. As a result, in 1990, the proportion of women elected as deputies to local people's congresses had reached 21 per cent and in some places had risen to 25 per cent.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

6. In the rural areas, where 80 per cent of China's population lived, and 50 per cent of whose workforce was constituted by women, a major campaign had been launched through the joint efforts of a number of governmental and non-governmental bodies, including the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, the State Education Commission and ACWF, aimed at improving the technical skills and literacy of rural women. Since the campaign had begun in 1989, with a total involvement of 120 million rural women, 2.8 million women had become literate and 240,000 rural women had qualified as agricultural technicians. The practical and professional skills taught under the campaign enabled women to achieve better economic results in their work and enhanced their social and family status.

7. Lastly, with reference to maternal and child health, efforts were under way in China to realize the World Health Organization (WHO) target of health for all by the year 2000. One of the objectives of the current five-year plan was to cut mortality rates of pregnant women and women in childbirth by 50 per cent. New emphasis was being placed on the health requirements of women, particularly in the rural areas. Efforts would be made to strengthen the maternal and child healthcare network and to enhance the training of doctors and health workers, with particular emphasis on the needs of women and with training programmes for grass-roots medical workers in preventive medicine and basic health care.

8. With regard to the questions set out in the report of the pre-session working group (CEDAW/C/1992/CRP.2, annex I), he said that he would respond first to the questions of a general nature, then take up those relating to specific articles of the Convention.

9. In 1990, out of its gross national product (GNP) of 1,768.61 billion yuan renminbi, the Chinese Government had allocated Y 22.176 billion to agricultural production assistance, Y 61.729 billion to education, culture, science and public health and Y 5.504 billion to pensions and social security. On the question of promoting women's awareness of laws, he said that, under the second five-year programme for the dissemination of legal knowledge, a wide range of measures was under way to promote legal education and awareness of the country's laws among its citizens, involving the participation of 300 million women.

Article 2

10. Under the provisions of the Act on Public Enterprises, both male and female workers had the right to participate in the democratic management of their enterprises. The intention of article 11 of the Act was to derive maximum benefit from the contribution of young workers, by giving full play to their managerial talents and initiatives and by drawing on the full range of their technical skills and innovative talents.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

11. Among local laws and regulations to promote the equality of men and women, he cited legislation on the protection of the rights and interests of women and children formulated by Beijing municipality, which stated that attention should be given to the promotion of women cadres to leading posts, by the city of Tianjin, which stipulated that the principle of equality of men and women should be implemented scrupulously and prohibited any discrimination in the recruitment of workers and managerial staff, and by the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, which stressed the importance of selecting and training women technicians and managers. With respect to remuneration, legislation had been passed in Jiangxi province establishing full equality of men and women in all employment matters and establishing equal pay for equal work, and Xingjiang Uygur Autonomous Region had adopted legal provisions ensuring the same rights for women as for men in all spheres of life, including the evaluation of professional titles and levels of remuneration. Local legislation on the allocation and construction of housing in rural areas included an act adopted by Liaoning province establishing equal rights for women to the allocation and use of private land and stating that male and female workers enjoyed the same rights to the allocation of houses, thus breaking with the previous practice whereby only men were entitled to housing. Similar legislation had been adopted by Hebei province.

12. Under the Constitution, the economic independence of all women, including widows, was protected by law, and violations of women's economic rights were punishable under China's criminal and inheritance laws. The Working Group on Women and Children, set up under the Internal Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, was mainly concerned with legislative work, and its women members therefore mainly comprised women with legal backgrounds or administrative experience in the area of women's and children's welfare.

Article 5

13. The Chinese Government attached great importance to enhancing the image of women through the mass media; a seminar on women, development and the mass media had been held in 1990, with the participation of major news agencies and 37 newspapers and magazines, to discuss the role of the mass media in promoting a new, positive image of women, thereby ensuring their greater self-respect, self-confidence and independence. He conceded that the opening-up of the country to outside influences and the development of a commodity economy had increased the use of stereotypes of women in advertisements.

Violence (arts. 2, 5, 11, 12 and 16)

14. Violence against women was not a serious problem in China; active steps were being taken, in the context of programmes to raise popular awareness of the country's laws, to ensure due punishment for the perpetration of such violence. Under the Criminal Code of the People's Republic of China, rape of a woman was punishable by terms of imprisonment of between 3 and 10 years.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

Sexual relations with a girl under the age of 14 was considered to be rape and entailed an even heavier punishment. Acts of rape committed in aggravating circumstances or accompanied by serious bodily injury were punishable by terms of imprisonment of between 10 years and life, or by death.

15. Maltreatment of one family member by another was punishable, under the Criminal Code, by imprisonment of up to two years or by other measures such as criminal detention and public surveillance. If the maltreatment resulted in serious injury or death of the victim, the sentence was increased to between two and seven years. The Government had adopted a decision on the severe punishment of criminals who abducted and trafficked in, or kidnapped, women or children; the decision established a prison term of not more than 10 years for the crime of abduction of women or children and the death sentence, with confiscation of property, where the crime was accompanied by aggravating circumstances.

Article 6

16. Chinese law explicitly prohibited prostitution; its rules and regulations on public order established penalties for consorting with prostitutes, pimping and operating brothels, including detention, warnings, written confessions, rehabilitation through physical work or fines of up to Y 5,000. The Criminal Code of 1979 stated that those luring women into prostitution or operating brothels for profit were subject to prison sentences of up to five years, detention or surveillance, with more severe penalties where there were aggravating circumstances. The decision on the strict prohibition of prostitution, adopted in 1991, established sentences of 10 years to life, and fines of up to Y 10,000 for pimping. Public security organs and other relevant bodies were entitled to round up prostitutes and their customers and place them in rehabilitation projects lasting between six months and two years, comprising legal and moral education and productive labour activities. Compulsory medical treatment was administered to those suffering from venereal diseases. The Chinese Government aimed to eradicate prostitution through a gradual process of building up the country's economy, conducting ideological education programmes and strengthening the relevant legislation and law enforcement measures.

Article 7

17. Currently, 634 deputies to the National People's Congress, constituting 21.3 per cent of the total, were women and its Standing Committee had 16 women members, constituting 11.6 per cent of the total, and 2 women Vice-Chairmen, out of a total of 20 Vice-Chairmen. Among proposals put forward by women deputies concerning the protection of women's rights and interests, he mentioned the regulations adopted by the State Council on the protection of work by women employees, which had taken effect in 1998, as well as an important proposal on the preparation of a State law on the protection of the rights and interests of women. In the 1990 elections, the proportion of women

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

elected to local People's Congresses had averaged 21 per cent and, in areas with higher levels of education and economic development, had run as high as 25 per cent. Of the 175 members of the Central Committee of the Thirteenth Congress of the Communist Party of China, 10 were women; of the 110 alternate members, 12 were women. The 200-member Advisory Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China included one woman.

18. Efforts to increase the percentage of women in People's Congresses focused on enhancing the capabilities of the women themselves, to ensure that they could play a more vigorous role in society; on educating women to overcome the inferiority complex they had inherited from centuries of feudalism and to foster their self-respect, self-confidence and independence; on mass public awareness campaigns to eradicate feudal notions of male superiority and, until complete de facto equality of men and women was achieved, on formulating the necessary policies and measures to ensure women's right to participation in the management of State affairs.

19. One of the main tasks of ACWF was to represent women in the Government and to help formulate laws and regulations concerning women. ACWF leaders held high posts in the National People's Congress, the People's Political Consultative Conference and relevant departments of the State Council. Currently, the Chairman of ACWF was also Chairman of the Financial and Economic Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Although there were three women Ministers in the Chinese Government and one woman Vice-President on China's Supreme Court, ACWF was trying to help more women obtain decision-making posts through its archive and recommendation system for qualified women.

20. ACWF admitted as members not individuals, but organizations. Any organization could join ACWF by filing an application and agreeing to abide by the Federation's constitution.

Article 8

21. Women represented 26.9 per cent of China's diplomatic corps, and China had eight women ambassadors.

Article 10

22. The 70 per cent figure cited in the first question under article 10 did not refer to the proportion of women who were illiterate, but to the proportion of illiterates who were women. In 1989, 95 per cent of school-age girls had been attending school; girl students in primary, secondary and higher education represented 46 per cent, 41.4 per cent and 33.7 per cent of the respective totals. Moreover, both ACWF and the State Education Commission were carrying out literacy programmes; the law on compulsory education was being implemented; and education funding was expected to increase.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

23. Chinese universities applied the same admission standards to male and female candidates. Boys and girls in urban and rural schools had equal access to sports activities; physical education was compulsory for girls as well as boys. In preparing teaching materials, the Chinese Government sought to establish the idea of equality of the sexes and a positive image of women.

Article 11

24. The principle of equal pay for equal work was applied in both State-owned and collective enterprises in China. He attributed the increase in the number of working women to the State's employment policy; there was no correlation between that increase and the drop in the male employment rate. The formalities for self-employed workers were non-discriminatory, and women's rights and interests were further protected through the assistance and legal advice of women's federations. In rural areas, most of the specialized enterprises headed by women engaged in traditional farming, animal-, fowl- and fish-breeding, processing, handicrafts, trade and services.

25. In cases of wrongful dismissal, female employees were entitled to assistance from their trade unions. In the event of discrimination in employment, women had recourse to the courts, which practised a system of final adjudication with two instances.

26. The State Commission on Education encouraged all employers to give all their employees occupational training; currently, the proportion of women trainees was over one third, which was about the same percentage represented by women in the total labour force. The Ministry of Labour's regulations on labour safety were observed by enterprises of all types, which were subject to corrective measures if they employed fewer women in order to avoid providing the required services.

27. Because it attached great importance to meeting the basic needs of former employees of bankrupt enterprises, the Chinese Government not only arranged for the appropriate re-employment of such workers, but also provided unemployment subsidies for periods of either 12 or 24 months, depending on the employee's seniority. Medical care, funeral subsidies and pensions for family members were also provided pending re-employment. The Government was responsible for retraining and guiding the unemployed in their search for new jobs.

28. Women from trade unions and from women's organizations had participated in the preparation of the new labour code. On the question of measures to deal with sexual harassment, he replied that the problem, which was not very serious in China, was addressed on a case-by-case basis by the competent administrative or judicial organs, in accordance with constitutional guarantees protecting the human dignity of every citizen.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

Article 12

29. There were no current studies of the effect of Norplant subdermal contraceptives on women's health because the use of the drug on a trial basis in recent years had indicated no serious side effects. China was currently developing and producing similar contraceptives. With respect to the UNFPA-assisted project in China, which had begun in 1979, he cited statistics showing that the infant mortality rate had dropped from 200 per 1,000 prior to 1949 to 34.68 per 1,000 in 1981. Information on health care and birth control had been disseminated through the distribution of printed materials, lecture tours, training courses, videotapes and exhibitions. The State Commission on Birth Control, the State Education Commission and the Ministry of Health were involved in those activities. Such information was aimed at both men and women, who had an equal obligation to practise birth control and an equal say in their choice of a method of contraception.

30. In accordance with the traditional Chinese reverence for the elderly, the Government had instituted social insurance, welfare and free medical and health care for that group. It was also conducting research on the ageing of the population. Elderly Chinese women were guaranteed equal rights with men, in terms of both care and opportunities to contribute to society. In reply to the question on the single-child policy, he cited statistics indicating that, although the percentage of one-child families had risen from 22.73 in 1970 to 52.22 in 1988, the male-to-female ratio over the same period had only changed from 105.9/100 to 106.8/100.

31. Although acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) was still rare in China, a number of cases had been detected in recent years. Consequently, the Government had set up a Working Group, a State Working Committee and an Expert Commission to coordinate its AIDS-prevention policy. It was also building a monitoring network; limiting imports of blood products, prohibiting the use of illicit injectable drugs, taking steps to control venereal diseases and trying to develop drugs to treat AIDS; and carrying out publicity campaigns on AIDS prevention.

Article 13

32. China considered that the care of the elderly, the solitary and the handicapped was the responsibility not only of various governmental agencies and popular organizations, but also of society as a whole.

Article 14

33. Economic reform in China's rural areas had led to the comprehensive development of agriculture, forestry, small-scale production, industry, trade, transportation, construction and services. Rural women therefore had the opportunity to engage in many occupations other than agriculture, and a number of them had become workers or managers in town- or village-run enterprises.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

The new contract labour system had improved efficiency and had led to great progress in tapping the potential of rural women in China. Products made for export by Chinese women included foodstuffs, handicrafts, garments, toys and electronic appliances. The products were generally ordered by foreign trade companies or manufacturers, and some were made with materials from abroad. Because the Chinese Government was unable to provide pensions to retired women in rural areas, the availability and level of pensions depended on the level of development of the collective economy in each region. The rural collectives allocated land according to family size, irrespective of the sex of the person concerned.

34. The Government was addressing the problem of providing potable water, sanitation and electricity to all inhabitants of rural areas by encouraging popular participation to accelerate the process.

Article 15

35. Marriage and the family were guaranteed protection under China's Constitution. The Marriage Law provided for free consent to marriage, monogamy and equality of the sexes, including equal rights to engage in production, work, study and social activities. That law had promoted both stability in family life and social progress through increased participation by women. Although women judges were often better able to understand women's situations than men, the interpretation of legislation in favour of women did not necessarily depend on the sex of the judge concerned.

Article 16

36. China's divorce rate was still the lowest in the world, though it had risen in recent years. Women's increased willingness to file for divorce was a sign of their emancipation. At the same time, however, China maintained its traditional emphasis on the family by providing information on the Marriage Law to every household, sponsoring the emulation campaign of "model families" and running special teaching programmes for newlyweds. In cases of disputes between spouses, the work units and trade unions of the parties concerned, women's organizations, the relevant legal departments and neighbours were all available to provide advice and mediation. In handling divorces, the Chinese Government and society always sought to protect the rights and interests of women and children.

37. Ms. CORTI said that, in its remarks on the implementation of article 2 (b) of the Convention, China had drawn attention to local laws and regulations regarding the protection of mothers who gave birth to girls. She asked why the Chinese Government considered such protection necessary.

38. With respect to article 6, she asked whether the Government of China was taking steps to protect women imprisoned for engaging in prostitution. She wished to know whether the Government was taking any measures to rehabilitate former prostitutes.

(Ms. Corti)

39. Referring to article 10, she inquired whether the literacy campaign in Tibet involved the teaching of Chinese or Tibetan.

40. With respect to article 12, she wished to know whether the Chinese people had freely accepted the Government's family planning policy, and whether the Government had succeeded in persuading families to have only one child. She wished to know what the Chinese Government's concept of the ideal family was.

41. Commenting on paragraph 2 (c) of article 14, she said that it seemed that women who lived in more developed areas derived greater benefits from social security programmes. China therefore seemed to be moving towards a less egalitarian society, since its less developed regions were at a distinct disadvantage.

42. With respect to article 16, the report indicated that, in the choice of husband, the traditional criteria used to be candour, sincerity and good temper but that, in recent years, young people had begun to place more stress on intelligence, educational background, professional skill, sociability and helpfulness at home. Those new criteria did not seem to be in keeping with the qualities advocated by a socialist society, since prosperous and competent young men often received more attention from women.

43. Ms. FORDE commended the Government of China for its detailed and painstaking report. She had had the opportunity to visit China and witness firsthand the outstanding work of ACWF. It was clear that China had reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

44. Ms. LAIOU-ANTONIOU said that she too had visited China and was well aware of the difficulties the Chinese Government was encountering in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination against women. Nevertheless, progress had so far been very slow and must be speeded up. In promoting equality, political will was not enough. Social and economic structures must be changed in order to eradicate traditional patterns of behaviour. While a small number of women were taking part in political decision-making, most Chinese women still faced discrimination and prejudice and were forced to continue their traditional role in society.

45. In its replies to questions relating to article 11 of the Convention, China had indicated that women received equal pay for equal work. However, the Committee's question had been whether the principle of equal pay for work of equal value applied in China.

46. Ms. EVATT said that more comprehensive and extensive education would promote women's economic independence and encourage their participation in government. She wondered whether the Chinese Government was placing greater emphasis on tertiary education for women in order to improve their position in society.

(Ms. Evatt)

47. It appeared that sexual harassment in the workplace was not a major problem in China, and she wondered whether that was because Chinese women had not had sufficient opportunities to discuss that issue.

48. She inquired whether the model daughter-in-law award still existed. The practice of rewarding virtuous daughters-in-law tended to reinforce traditional attitudes and should be abolished.

49. Ms. BERNARD thanked the Chinese delegation for its detailed replies contained in its second periodic report. ACWF was very well organized and had made a great contribution to improving the status of Chinese women. She too wished to know whether the daughter-in-law award was still in existence and, if so, what the rationale for having such an award was.

50. Ms. BRAVO NUÑEZ DE RAMSEY said that, in rural areas of China, centuries-old traditions prejudicial to women persisted. Such phenonema must be eliminated. If China fully implemented its progressive and well-thought-out programme of reforms, it could one day become an ideal society for women.

51. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA del REAL said that it was difficult for people from other countries to comprehend the changes taking place in China. She therefore suggested that, in the next periodic report of China, information should be broken down according to the various regions of the country. The experience of Spain had demonstrated that democracy and economic development were vital for ensuring equality and basic well-being. Adequate production was essential for ensuring equitable distribution, and the broad dissemination of information that fostered respect for other traditions and ways of life would help eradicate ingrained prejudices and promote tolerance.

52. Ms. NIKOLAEVA said she was impressed by the Chinese Government's efforts to enhance the status of women in the family and society. She wished to know to what degree the Government of China had succeeded in improving the quality of life for women. ACWF had played a major role in training women, encouraging their political participation and involving them in development. In that regard, she wished to know how the Federation was financed.

53. Ms. SCHOPP-SCHILLING said that she agreed with Ms. Bustelo Garcia del Real that it would be useful for future reports to provide a breakdown of information by region, since that would make it easier to understand regional differences and introduce special programmes to deal with them. She also called for greater tolerance of cultural and political differences and asked whether women were prominent in the dissident movement, whether equality issues had been discussed in that context and whether any women were still detained or subject to restrictions as a result of their involvement in the movement.

(Ms. Schopp-Schilling)

54. She was concerned at the low number of women on the Central Committee of the Communist Party and felt that the problem was not lack of education but rather the structural barriers existing in a male-dominated society. She wanted to know whether the Party had any plans to introduce quotas for women in political positions.

55. Ms. AOUIJ welcomed the laws recently introduced to promote greater social equality but felt that the most important aspect was their implementation, since the application and interpretation of laws could be used either to hold up or accelerate developments. She hoped that in the case of China rapid progress would be achieved.

56. Ms. WALLA-TCHANGAI said that Chinese women were facing similar problems to women elsewhere, with the question of illiteracy being of particular concern. She commended their willingness to assist other women in their struggle. With regard to the law restricting families to one child, she was concerned that the preference for a boy child was prompting many women to abort female foetuses. She wondered whether that preference predated the introduction of the law or was a consequence of it.

57. Ms. AKAMATSU commended China for its report and thanked the Chinese representative for replying to the many questions which had been raised.

58. Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) said that the Chinese Government and women's organizations in China had made great efforts over the past 40 years to improve the status of women and eliminate discrimination, including the remnants of the feudal tradition, under which men were considered to be superior to women. The Government had also encouraged greater self-confidence, independence and self-esteem on the part of women, and today women played an important role in political, economic and cultural life, both in society at large and within the family. However, because of historical factors and continuing cultural and educational constraints, the situation was not entirely satisfactory and a number of problems remained. If genuine equality was to be achieved and the last traces of feudalism were to be eliminated, extensive efforts were needed on a long-term basis. Nevertheless, he was confident that progress could be maintained, since the Government had clear objectives and policies.

59. In reply to the questions concerning population, he noted that the Government had been advocating the one-child family and encouraging family planning since the late 1970s. That policy was in keeping with the current social and economic situation in China. Soon after the establishment of the new China, 60 per cent of families had more than three children. Had that trend been allowed to continue unchecked, the country would have suffered a population explosion. Given the limited amount of arable land available, it would have been impossible even to feed the population, let alone improve living standards.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

60. The one-child policy had been quite successful, as it had been seen to be in the common interest of the people and the country. However, there had been regional variations in implementation and the policy had been more successful in urban areas than in remote rural ones. Exceptions had been made in some areas where ethnic minorities lived and where population density was lower. For example, the policy had not been enforced in Tibet. The Government had relied on the mass media to provide the education and information necessary for applying the policy, and economic incentives had also been offered. In some areas, regulations had been introduced to protect women having baby girls, where the traditional preference for a boy might generate pressure on women to have an abortion.

61. On the question of prostitution, educational programmes had been introduced with the aim of providing an alternative livelihood, while treatment for venereal diseases had been made compulsory.

62. In reply to the question concerning the Tibetan language, he said that the Government of the autonomous region of Tibet had clearly stipulated that the Tibetan people were free to use and develop their own language. In 1987 the People's Congress of Tibet had adopted regulations giving the Tibetan language equal status with Chinese. It was the main language taught in schools and universities in the region.

63. On the question of regional differences in economic development, he said that, in a country as vast as China, levels of development had inevitably been uneven. Development had been rapid in coastal areas in the south and east and slower in the remote rural areas of the interior. The Government was seeking to achieve balanced development in all regions.

64. With regard to the criteria for marriage, he said that women now placed greater emphasis on the talents and abilities of potential husbands, a situation which reflected the economic development the country had experienced. As for the participation of men in household chores, the situation had improved considerably. In urban areas, both men and women now worked and they had been forced to share household responsibilities. The traditional division of labour was still more prevalent in rural areas, but there too the situation was changing.

65. In reply to the question concerning equal pay, he said that provisions to ensure equal pay for work of equal value did exist.

66. With regard to women's participation in political life and political activities, he said that under the Chinese Constitution men and women enjoyed all civil and political rights without distinction as to sex. Of course, there were those, both men and women, who did not agree with government policies, but the Government respected dissidents and did not consider different political or religious views to be grounds for discrimination.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

67. Sexual harassment did exist in China but was not a major problem, since relations between the sexes were governed by traditional family values. Anyone who violated those values would be exposed to social criticism and to criticism from within the family.

68. In reply to the questions concerning the daughter-in-law award, he said that there was a long tradition of responsibility for the elderly in China and it was customary for different generations to live together. Consequently, it was very important to promote good family relations and a sense of responsibility towards the elderly, and that was the purpose of the award.

69. He fully agreed that, in order to improve the status of women, emphasis must be placed on education and cultural exchanges. The Government had always attached great importance to education for girls, and ACWF had made great efforts to promote exchanges between women. As to the question of funding, the Federation was supported mainly by the Government, but also by donations.

70. In reply to the suggestion that China's third periodic report should provide more regional information, he said that his Government would study the matter closely. With regard to increasing the number of women in senior positions in the Chinese Communist Party, he said that it was Government policy to promote the status of women and he felt sure that the Communist Party shared the same objectives.

71. The CHAIRPERSON said that the report submitted by China contained two new and positive elements, namely the new laws to bring about equality adopted since 1985 and the structural adjustment measures designed to reform the economy. She welcomed the fact that the resources derived from increases in GNP were being earmarked for economic and social programmes which would benefit women, since in many cases structural adjustment programmes worked to the detriment of the more vulnerable categories of the population, particularly women. She therefore hoped that China's third periodic report would provide an assessment of that experience, which could prove useful as a model for other countries.

72. She noted that illiteracy was still a major problem but expressed satisfaction at the high percentage of women (26.9 per cent) employed in the diplomatic corps. The Committee had also been concerned that efforts to limit the population might be undertaken at the expense of women, given the preference for male children. However, the figures provided by the representative of China had removed such fears. Lastly, she hoped that China's next report would provide more detail on actions by the Government to eliminate customs deriving from the country's feudal past.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.